

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Phoenix South



2015 IMPACT REPORT

SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS AT BIRTH



90% OF A CHILD'S CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN,

so early experiences lay the foundation for success in school and in life. Arizonans created First Things First (FTF) to give more children the tools they need to arrive at school prepared to meet our state's high expectations. FTF provides resources and professional expertise then combines it with local decision-making to build on the work of community organizations impacting children and families. Local volunteers – parents, educators, business professionals, philanthropists, faith leaders and tribal representatives – decide how the funds will be used to best improve school readiness for children in their area.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS A STATE CAN MAKE

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman showed that every \$1 invested in early childhood can yield returns between \$4 and \$16. Early literacy and its impact on school success is one of the best examples of the return on investment in early childhood. High quality early learning experiences, rich in language and literacy, reduce early learning gaps and ensure that children are ready to start reading when they enter kindergarten.



Gaps in children's vocabulary start to appear as early as
18 MONTHS.



By the time children are
3 & 4 YEARS OLD,
their vocabulary, attention and
general knowledge are predictors of
THIRD & FOURTH GRADE
reading comprehension.



THIRD GRADE
reading ability is one of the
best predictors of
HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION.



As an early childhood system partner, First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that: strengthen families in their role as their child's first teacher; improve the quality of early learning environments like preschool and child care, and expand access to those programs; and, promote prevention and early identification of health problems that could impact learning later on. By getting more Arizona kids ready for school, FTF helps put children on a path to academic success that benefits them, our communities and our state.

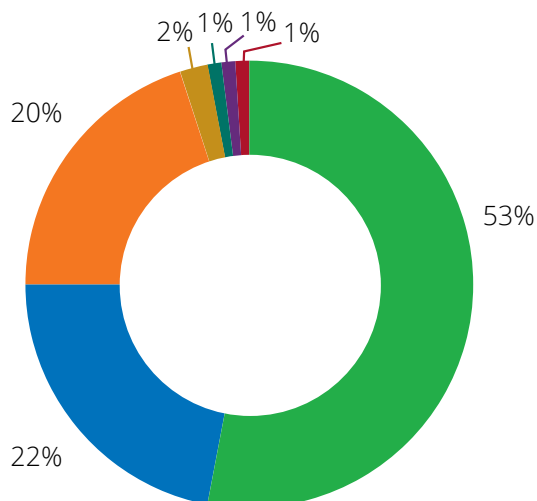
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INVESTED IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A
\$16 RETURN

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

PHOENIX SOUTH FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- Quality Preschool and Child Care \$11,315,226**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$4,598,400**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- Preventive Health \$4,228,071**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- Workforce Development and Training \$464,530**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- Research and Accountability \$306,171**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- System Coordination \$236,858**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.
- Parent and Community Awareness \$218,138**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.

Total = \$21,367,396

- 6,844** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 2,667** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 22,794** Families accessed early childhood information, education or referrals through family resource centers.
- 8,988** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 1,033** Families received voluntary in-home visits from trained providers to enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs, or dealing with multiple births.
- 786** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 10,000+** Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 9,450** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.
- 5,529** Infants and toddlers involved with the child welfare system benefitted from training and coordination efforts to meet their unique developmental needs.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



QUALITY PRESCHOOL PUTS PHOENIX FIRST GRADER AT TOP OF CLASS

Maria Jesus Cervantes' initial experience with a child care center left her toddler crying every time she dropped her off. Through Quality First – First Things First's early learning quality improvement and rating system – Cervantes researched other potential child care settings for her child and found Phoenix Day, which has achieved a Quality Plus rating.

Cervantes' fears were quickly alleviated. Natalia quickly learned all of her colors and shapes and had a smile on her face when she was dropped off and when she was picked up at the end of the day. "There was instruction going on every day; there was a plan and I had meetings with her teachers," Cervantes said. "I was amazed that they were teaching her science and math."

Natalia also gained confidence every day as she shared new information with her mother of things she had learned. As Natalia moved on to kindergarten, she excelled in her class. The first grader is reading Junie B. Jones books. At her age she is expected to read around 20 words per minute, Natalia is reading 80, Cervantes said.

"She looked forward to going to school every day, she was ready for kindergarten," Cervantes said. "Early education makes a huge difference in preparing kids for school," Cervantes said. "Natalia is testament to that."



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